

BACKGROUND FROM OTTAWA

**Fledgling
M.P. finds
life full
of surprises**

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OTTAWA

ROBERT TEMPLE is one of those strange Canadians who thinks he's lucky to be a rookie member of Parliament.

Consider his run of luck.

To get the job he went into debt to finance a campaign in the rural-urban Ontario constituency of Hastings South.

To win the seat he had to wait a week following the April 8 election so that 682 service votes could reverse his opponent's lead and send him to the House of Commons.

A few days later while on a trip to Toronto, he had to rush home to Belleville to view the remains of his law office gutted by fire.

Then he was off to Ottawa—arriving nearly friendless in a city he did not know and where he rented a furnished bachelor apartment he can just afford to live in five days of the week.

His new quarters have made him a weekend husband, father and lawyer.

Raw and unknown

All these preliminaries found Bob Temple ready for his new job as a raw, unknown backbench Liberal member of Parliament.

Why bother?

"I know it's corny, but I want to be of some help. And I enjoy it."

Each federal election produces its batch of new faces in Parliament. These men, for the most part, are eager, anxious to get things done and perhaps even to set the world on fire.

Whether their accomplishments prove great or small, few freshmen members escape the difficulties, sacrifices, initial disappointments and hardships of a first term in office.

Bob Temple's initiation is no worse and no better than many.

"The first day I took my seat in the House, I had a sense of awe. I said to myself—this is it. The enormity of the thing. It was like realizing finally I was an M.P. I was there.

"I had the same feeling when I stepped into St. Peter's Church in Rome," he recalled.

Mr. Temple took his seat and began to listen and watch. Funny things began to happen.

"I was listening to Stanley Knowles (NDP — Winnipeg North Centre) the other day. You can learn from him. I couldn't understand why people were walking out on him."

Then another let-down:

'Shut up'

"This, in some ways, is like the highest court in the land. But my God, some of the interjections you hear from members. If they can't shout anything except 'shut up' or 'sit down,' Why don't they just say nothing."

Nevertheless, the days he spends in the House listening to debates,

trying to learn the House rules, and watching the operation of Parliament are the highlight of his day.

In 36 years, Bob Temple had carved out a successful way of life as a city councillor and small city lawyer. Now he's learning a new one.

Stretching his \$10,000 M.P.'s salary over two households while his law practice suffers in his absence from home strains his finances to the limit.

"I limit my expenses in Ottawa. I don't often go out at nights," he says.

This means that Mr. Temple often spends evenings alone in his apartment trying to catch up on his reading.

Food is not too much of a problem. He eats in the parliamentary cafeteria most of the time. At night, without fail, he munches on soda crackers, peanut butter and drinks milk. "The finest lunch in the world."

Shares office

Then to his office in the west block which he shares with another member and their two secretaries. Mornings are usually taken up with answering mail and work for constituents.



ROBERT TEMPLE
Getting the feel of Ottawa

Bob Temple is lucky in that he can get home most weekends. But often he spends much of that precious time speaking to constituent groups and in trying to squeeze some law work out on Saturdays.

The time he has left for his wife and two young daughters is almost insignificant. "When you come home, the children look at you as if they didn't know you."

Gone also is the time for coaching a championship softball team, bridge games, drives in the country, and the odd afternoon when you ditch the job and just go home.

Big impression

One thing that made a sizeable impression on Mr. Temple was Tuesday's vote on a non-confidence motion in Parliament.

"My name was called and I felt for the first time I was accomplishing something," he recalled.

The Liberals won the vote by a narrow 11-vote margin and Mr. Temple was so worked up by it, he couldn't get to sleep that night.